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Local News

BTADD executive director calling it quits

By MARLA TONCRAY, News Editor

Tuesday, May 6, 2008 10:54 PM EDT

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Thirty one years ago, Steve Miller accepted an entry level position with Buffalo Trace Area Development District after graduating from Murray State University and an internship with the city of Murray.

Miller laughed when he said like all recent college graduates, he mailed resumes out to a multitude of potential employers and was interested in following up with any interviews offered.

As it happened, then BTADD Executive Director Terrell Ross contacted Miller and in August, 1977, Miller began his duties in Maysville; first in transportation planning, moving to economic development, associate director, assistant director and in 1986 he assumed the helm of BTADD as executive director.

Miller is just one of three people who has held the executive director position since BTADD was established and as of May 31, he will retire after leading the agency for 22 years.

"I'd like to take a little time off," Miller said from his office Tuesday, adding he plans to take a couple of months to possibly travel with his wife, Kathy and to also care for his father, who has been ill lately.

Miller, who is originally from Murray, lives in Fleming County with his wife and is the father of two grown children, Aaron and Stephanie.



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By his own admission, his "retirement" will be short lived, as he plans to move back into the work force in some way after leaving BTADD. Miller said he's had a "few conversations" with people and is pursuing opportunities to stay involved with the communities he's served for so many years.

As executive director of BTADD, Miller's been involved in all types of government entities, community projects, transportation development, work force development, and other projects within a seven-county region -- Mason, Fleming, Bracken, Lewis and Robertson counties, as well as Brown and Adams counties in Ohio.

He cited his involvement with numerous industrial authorities, the port authority in Maysville and county water districts as part of his and the agency's duties in helping local governments secure funds and grow public services.

And most recently, he noted the agency's involvement in helping local volunteer fire departments like Tilton, Mount Carmel, May's Lick and Lewisburg secure funding for new buildings and equipment to better serve their communities.

And while he talks about the support services BTADD and its staff provides, he is quick to credit local government officials, state senators and representatives and BTADD staff members for the success of the programs and the growth the agency has seen during his tenure.

"What we do should be reflective of what communities need us to do," Miller said. "We're a collective staff for the region."

Prior to Tuesday's interview, Miller was asked to reflect upon which projects he would list as accomplishments under his leadership and which ones may have been disappointments.

He listed the following as significant accomplishments not just for himself, but the citizens of the region.

- Creation of industrial parks in Fleming, Mason, and Lewis counties; with each park seeking tenants, Miller said having a spec building at the parks continues to bring potential employers to the area. He also noted the completion of Ronald Reagan Parkway between the Black Oak Industrial Park and Kentucky 9.
- Mount Olivet and Tollesboro sewer projects. He said the Mount Olivet project "was personally gratifying" because it was under way when he arrived in 1977 and was completed two years ago.
- Senior Citizen Centers and aging services
- Success of downtown revitalization projects in Maysville, Flemingsburg, Vanceburg and Augusta; with Brooksville and Mount Olivet now pursuing funding to do the same.
- Blue Licks Battlefield State Resort Park improvements, land acquisitions, lodging facilities and other projects secured with the help of the late Rep. Pete Worthington.
- Rerouting of Kentucky 11 between Flemingsburg and Mount Sterling.
- William Harsha Bridge: Miller referred to the project as "one of the biggest that comes to mind."

"It's very rewarding to see something of that magnitude come to fruition," Miller said.

"We've had a role in a lot of these. These are the things that stand out to me that are important to the region while I was here," Miller said.

Miller's list of disappointments is short: he noted the Bracken County Industrial Park has been "disappointing that hasn't come to fruition." He also said he would like to see progress at each industrial park as far as securing tenants, but understands each industrial authority will have to "weather the current economic situation."

The agency itself has grown since 1977, when the offices were located on the fifth floor of the former State National Bank Building (U.S. Bank), in 1986 offices were located within three



Steve Miller

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different properties at 327 West Second Street and in 2001, the official dedication of the Kenton Commonwealth Center took place.

Miller said the Tenco Workforce, Geographic Information System and Human and Aging Services departments have incurred the most growth within the agency's structure and each has proven successful in its own right. He also noted the continued work of the agency with county water districts to expand and improve water service to rural areas has been ongoing and will continue to be an important part of what BTADD does.

"I just try to make a positive change...that's what I've been about," Miller said.

Contact Marla Toncray at marla.toncray@lee.net or 606-564-9091, ext. 275.

During its regular monthly meeting held Tuesday, the Buffalo Trace Area Development District Board of Directors voted to appoint Amy Kennedy as the incoming Executive Director of BTADD.

Kennedy will replace current BTADD Executive Director Steve Miller, who will retire after 31 years with the agency effective May 31.

Kennedy has served as programs director for BTADD since 2003.

Reader Comments

Comments are limited to 200 words or less.

classmate of Amy wrote on May 7, 2008 9:25 AM:

" CONGRATULATIONS, AMY!!!! "

george plummer wrote on May 7, 2008 7:40 AM:

" thanks to the ledger for a great article about steve miller. I was able to work closely with steve for a number of years and I must say that he is without question the best add director in all of kentucky. his grasp of the issues and savvy in handling the egos of many politicians he had to work with always impressed me. he is the best organized person i have ever known. thank you steve miller for all you have done for btaad and all of kentucky "

James Switzerchief VVFD wrote on May 7, 2008 1:19 AM:

" Congratulations on your retirement Steve, Lewis County and Vanceburg salutes you. AS Chief of the fire dept here, I knew that we could always count on your support and guidance everytime we needed it. Good luck in your endeavors, may retirement be good to you, and may God bless yo as you have blessed the BTADD and Vanceburg "

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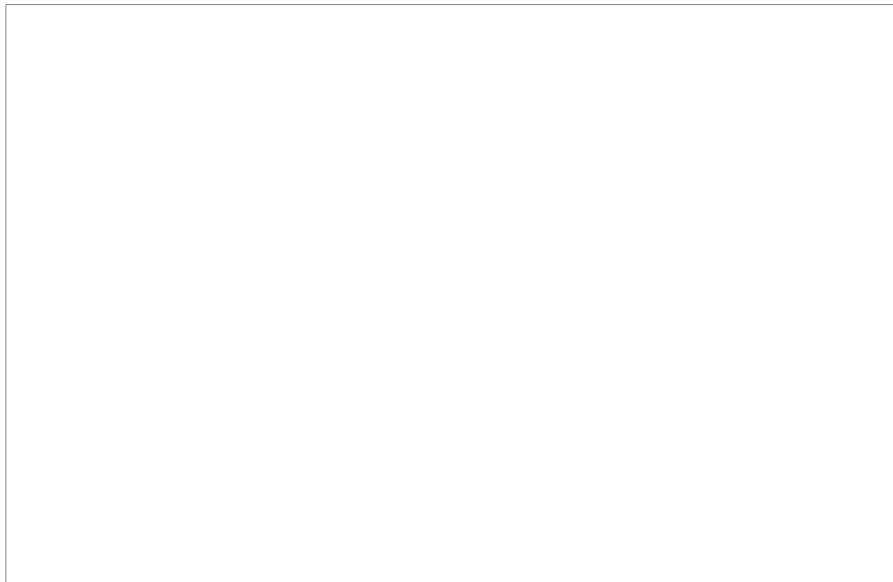


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